

The Trinity (The Father, Son & Holy Spirit)

1) Is there more than one God?

Scripture makes it very clear that there is only one God. Read the following verses in Isaiah.
Isaiah 45:5, 43:10, 44:6, 45:14, 18, 21, 22, 46:5, 9

2) What is the Trinity? The trinity is a foundational Christian doctrine that means that God exists in three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and each equally and eternally coexist as the one true God.

3) How can God be one and three at the same time?

As difficult as it is for us to understand how plurality can coexist with unity, these concepts are completely compatible. God is “one” in nature, and “three” in persons. The Father is not the same person as the Son; the Son is not the same person as the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is not the same person as Father. They are distinct persons; yet, they are all the one God. They are in absolute perfect harmony consisting of one “substance”. They are coeternal, coequal, and co-powerful.

Many earthly illustrations have been used to help understand this concept. Probably the best illustration is that of our universe, consisting of time, space and matter, which is, essentially, a trinity of trinities. Time consists of past, present and future; space consists of height, width and depth; and matter consists of solid, liquid, and gas. Other examples include a single ray of light (comprised of three primary colors), an egg (shell, yoke, egg white), or a musical cord consisting of three tones, etc. Each of these examples fall short with their own inherent problems when used as an illustration of the triune God of the Bible, but at least they can help us to recognize that plurality can indeed coexist with unity.

4) Is the word “trinity” in the Bible?

While the actual word trinity is not in the English translation of the Bible, there are many verses that describe the concept of the trinity or allude to it by the Hebrew / Greek context. Note the following verses (emphasis added).

Genesis 1:26 – And God said, Let *Us* make man in our own image...*

Genesis 3:22 – And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of *Us*, to know good and evil...*

Genesis 11:7 – Come, let *Us* go down and there confuse their language...*

Isaiah 6:3 – And one cried out onto another, and said *Holy, holy, holy*, is the Lord of hosts.

Matthew 28:19 – Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the *Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*.

Luke 3:22 – And the *Holy Spirit* descended in bodily form like a dove upon *Him*, and a *voice from heaven* which said, *You are My beloved Son*; in *you I* am well pleased.

John 14:16 – And *I* will pray the *Father*, and *He will give you another Helper*, that *He* may abide with you forever – the *Spirit of truth*, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees *Him* nor knows *Him*; but you know *Him*, for *He* dwells with you and will be in you.

John 15:26 – But when the *Helper* comes, whom *I shall send to you from the Father*, the *Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me*.

John 16:7 – Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the *Helper* will not come to you; but *if I depart, I will send Him to you*. And when He has come, *He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because *I go to My Father and you see Me no more*; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Acts 2:33 – Therefore being *exalted to the right hand of God*, and having *received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this, which you now see and hear*.

2 Corinthians 13:14 – The *grace of the Lord Jesus Christ*, and the *love of God*, and the *communion of the Holy Spirit* be with you all.

1 Timothy 3:16 – And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: *God was manifested in the flesh, justified by the Spirit*, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on the world, received up in glory.

1 John 5:7 – For there are three that bear witness in heaven: *The Father, the Word (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one*.

*Note: The word *Elohim* (in Genesis 1:1, 1:26, 3:22, and 11:7) is plural, but is used with a singular verb, indicating that there is “more than one within the one.”

The Trinity

The chart below should help you to see how the doctrine of the Trinity is derived from Scripture.

The list is not exhaustive, only illustrative.

WORKS / ATTRIBUTE	FATHER	SON	HOLY SPIRIT
Called God	Phil. 1:2	John 1:1,14; Col. 2:9	Acts 5:3-4
Creator	Is. 64:8; 44:24	John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17	Job 33:4,26:13
Death of Christ	John 3:16, Romans 8:32	John 10:17-18 Galatians 2:20	Hebrews 9:14
Resurrection of Christ	Acts 2:24 Romans 6:4	John 2:19 John 10:17-18	Romans 8:11 1 Peter 3:18
Indwells in the Believer	2 Cor. 6:16	Col. 1:27	John 14:17
Omnipresence (Everywhere)	Jeremiah 23:24	Matt. 28:20	Ps. 139:7-10
Omniscience (All-knowing)	1 John 3:20	John 16:30	1 Cor. 2:10-11
Sanctifies (Sets apart)	1 Thess. 5:23	Heb. 2:11	1 Pet. 1:2
Life giver	Gen. 2:7	John 1:3; 5:21	2 Cor. 3:6,8
Fellowship	1 John 1:3	1 Cor. 1:9	2 Cor. 13:14
Eternal	Ps. 90:2	Micah 5:1-2	Rom. 8:11
Searches the heart	Jer. 17:10	Rev. 2:23	1 Cor. 2:10
Truth	John 7:28	Revelation 3:7	1 John 5:6
Savior	1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10	2 Tim. 1:10; Titus 1:4; 3:6	...
Judges	John 8:50	John 5:21,30	...

Summary: God is not one person, the Father, with Jesus as a creation and the Holy Spirit as a force (Jehovah's Witnesses). Neither is He one person who took three consecutive forms, i.e., the Father, became the Son, who became the Holy Spirit. Nor is God the divine nature of the Son (where Jesus had a human nature perceived as the Son and a divine nature perceived as the Father (United Pentecostal). Nor is the Trinity an office held by three separate Gods (. Three separate Gods would be a triad, not a trinity, which is one God.

There are many cult groups who deny the Trinity, stating that the doctrine was not mentioned until the fourth century, after the time of the Council of Nicea (325). This Council "was called by Emperor Constantine to deal with the error of Arianism which was threatening the unity of the Christian Church. However, many of the great Christian martyrs, theologians and apologists from the first three centuries are very clear and emphatic in their belief in the trinity. (i.e. - Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen)

Most importantly though, the Bible is very clear that God is a Trinity of persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is not the same person as the Son; the Son is not the same person as the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is not the same person as Father. They are distinct persons; yet, they are all the one true God of the Bible. They are in absolute perfect harmony consisting of one substance. They are coeternal, coequal, and co-powerful. If any one of the three were removed, there would be no Biblical God. There is, though, an apparent separation of some functions among the members of the Godhead. For example, the Father chooses who will be saved (Eph. 1:4); the Son redeems them (Eph.1: 7); and the Holy Spirit seals them, (Eph. 1:13).



Minimum suggested Scripture reading on this subject: The book of John